



CDSS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

August 2, 2018

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE (ACIN) NO. I-49-18

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE-TO-WORK COORDINATORS
ALL CONSORTIA PROJECT MANAGERS
ALL COUNTY REFUGEE PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS
(CalWORKs) OUTCOMES AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW (Cal-OAR)

REFERENCE: [SENATE BILL \(SB\) 89](#) (CHAPTER 24, STATUTES OF 2017);
[WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTION 11523](#)

The purpose of this letter is to inform County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of the Cal-OAR initiative, and provide an update on the status of Cal-OAR and implementation timeframes. Further guidance regarding Cal-OAR will be released leading up to the July 2019 implementation.

Cal-OAR Background and Purpose

Pursuant to SB 89, the purpose of Cal-OAR is to establish a local accountability system that facilitates continuous improvement of county CalWORKs programs by collecting and disseminating data and best practices. The Cal-OAR consists of three main components: performance indicators, a CalWORKs county self-assessment process, and a CalWORKs county system improvement plan, including a peer review component.

The Cal-OAR will be structured in three-year cycles, with a county self-assessment and system improvement plan required every three years. The first three-year cycle begins July 2019, concluding June 2022.

Stakeholder Workgroup

As required by statute, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has convened a workgroup comprised of representatives from county human services agencies, legislative staff, interested welfare advocacy and research organizations, current and former CalWORKs recipients, organizations that represent county human services agencies and county boards of supervisors, and representatives of community colleges, tribal organizations, the workforce investment system, and other stakeholders. The workgroup is charged with providing recommendations to CDSS on the Cal-OAR components and the work plan by which Cal-OAR will be conducted.

Work-to-Date

The Cal-OAR workgroup has convened quarterly since September 2017, with additional, more frequent subcommittee meetings occurring throughout each quarter. Recommendations for each of the required Cal-OAR components are currently under development. The workgroup's final recommendations and further guidance from CDSS are forthcoming.

Performance Indicators

The WIC 11523 (1)(A)(i) and (ii) specifies that Cal-OAR must include process and outcome measures within the following categories: participant engagement, service delivery, participation, employment, educational attainment, program exits and reentries, and may include other family and child well-being measures. The measures developed by CDSS, in consultation with the workgroup, will be used within the county self-assessment and system improvement plans. Additionally, statute directs the workgroup to develop recommendations for county financial incentives tied to the Cal-OAR performance indicators.

During the first three-year cycle, data baselines will be established for each of the measures. This initial data will serve as the basis of comparison for subsequent data sets. By 2022, standard target thresholds for the process measures will be established in consultation with the workgroup.

Data Collection

In order to measure CalWORKs processes and outcomes comprehensively, CWDs, local service providers, and other state agencies will share data with CDSS on the CalWORKs population. The specific data elements, timing, and data collection method will vary depending upon the performance indicators selected. However, statute requires data to be reported at least semiannually. Additional details will be provided leading up to implementation.

County Self-Assessment Process

Through the self-assessment process, CWDs will evaluate their CalWORKs programs' performance on the established performance indicators and will identify strengths and weaknesses of current practice and resource development. The process will also consider how local operations and systemic factors affect program outcomes and consider what areas of improvement the CWD would like to focus on in their system improvement plan.

System Improvement Plan

In the system improvement plan, CWDs will identify strategic focus areas based upon their self-assessment and will describe how they intend to improve their CalWORKs program in the specified areas. The CWDs will complete annual progress reports on the status of its system improvement plan.

As part of the system improvement plan, CWDs will engage in a peer review process that will focus on the CWD's selected areas for improvement and provide additional insight and technical assistance.

Timeline

Leading up to the implementation of Cal-OAR in July 2019, guidance will be released with details on CWD training, the selected performance indicators and data, the county self-assessment, and the system improvement plan. The Cal-OAR trainings will be provided to CWDs in Spring 2019. The timeframes for counties to complete each component of Cal-OAR within the first three-year cycle will be provided in subsequent county letter(s).

Contact

Additional information regarding Cal-OAR, can be found on the [Cal-OAR website](#). If you have questions concerning this letter or Cal-OAR, please contact your CalWORKs Employment Bureau county consultant at (916) 654-2137 or email the Cal-OAR inbox at CalOAR@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

KIM JOHNSON, Branch Chief
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division